Volume 7

HARAMBEE FLAME

Number 8

A Publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization

Fronting For "The Man"

In the late-sixties and early-seventies, African people in this country witnessed a veritable flood of visibility of black faces in government agencies and in the corporate sector. These African men and women wielded no substantive power. Rather, their placement in these visible positions was to serve the function of giving us the impression that "black power" was being realized, that we were making progress. While some of us gobbled this bait, others of us saw that the political/business establishment was playing a pacification game on us and that many, if not most, of these new visible Africans-in-"high"-places were only, as we put it, "fronting for the man."

America had to do something. Its cities were burning. Individuals and groups were speaking seriously about radical change and were being increasingly listened to. America launched a two-pronged attack on this political/social/cultural rumbling. On one hand, it set about to discredit and/or eliminate the radical African leadership. On the other, it sought to pacify us by installing African men and women into positions of symbolic power. In connection with the latter tactic, it put what many of us saw as "big money" into programs with hip-sounding titles. Ultimately, enough of us came to be sufficiently pacified, tired, frustrated, etc. so that our

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FRONTING FOR THE MAN; IN POLICE CUSTODY; UPCOMING H.A.C.O. PROGRAMS; FROM OTHER SOURCES: Education For Africans In The U.S., Hangings In Oakland, Problems in Radio, College in Tanzania, African Ecobank, Azanian Labor Actions.

In Police Custody —Byndon

Place: Port Elizabeth, South Africa

Subject: Biko, Steve

Age: 30

Description: black male

President: John Vorster

Police Minister: James Kruger

Injuries suffered by subject while in police custody: lumbar puncture, brain injury, renal(kidney) failure, lip injury, bruised rib, abrasions on wrists, wound on toe of left foot.

Date of subject's death: Sept. 12, 1977.

Cause of death(from court's inquest): Subject may have died from an impact to the head. Exact cause of death unknown. Subject allegedly threw a chair at an officer and had to be restrained.

Final disposition: That, "on the available evidence, the death cannot be attributed to any act or omission amounting to criminal offense on the part of any person."

Note: John Vorster was President at the time of this incident.

Place: Omaha, Nebraska - U.S.A.

Subject: Kellin, Richard

Age: 35

Description: black male

President: Ronald Reagan

Police Chief: Robert Wadman

Injuries suffered by subject while in police custody: skull fracture, bleeding in muscle tissue toward base of skull, brain swollen with fluid, fracture of the breast bone, both lungs swollen with fluid, area around left eye swollen with blood.

Date of subject's death: May 5, 1986.

Cause of death(from autopsy report): Subject developed pneumonia resulting from skull fracture. He allegedly shoved a table against an officer and was restrained.

Final disposition: All officers absolved of any wrong-doing.

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The preceding prepared by A'Jamal Rashad Byndon, with the assistance of his wife in translating medical terminology into common language.

Upcoming H.A.C.O. Programs

Tuesday, August 12 A'Jamal Rashad Byndon will give a presentation, "Black Face/ White Mask: Causes and Symptoms of Ethnic Pathology. This presentation will address the issue American-born Africans' identification with Caucasian cultural, social, and other values and traits.

Sunday, August 17(or 31) Pamela Wrenn and other Sisters will lead discussion on the question of Africans choosing Caucasians as mates and the causes and implications of this practice.

Tuesday, August 26 James Hinkston will present a theoretical perspective on "African-American Self-Concept."

All Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization meetings are at 6:00 p.m. If you are interested in attending, simply as a guest or as presenter of a specific educational and/ or cultural program, please contact us by writing: Harambee Afrikan Cultural Org.
P.O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE
68502-0500

If you wish to present a program, address your letter "Attn: Mondo."

Annual symposium, September 21 Plans for the symposium should be finalized shortly. Announcements forthcoming.

FRONTING. .

movement for change degenerated into resignation.

By no means did the phenomenon of "fronting for the man" begin during the turbulent sixties. Throughout the history of group domination over other groups, the dominating groups have been able to find individuals among the dominated willing to be used as buffers or puppets. The Roman Empire, for example, made extensive use of individuals from among its subject populations to carry out the administration of the Roman will. Tax-collectors in the time of Jesus, in the locales of Nazareth, Galilee, Jerusalem, etc., were not Romans. Nevertheless, the taxes they collected went primarily to the coffers of Caesar, which is one of the main reasons for the hatred and contempt with which they were looked upon by the common people in these areas. They were fronting for the man, functioning for his (the Roman conquerers) interests against those of their own people.

But the nature of the role of one who fronts for the man is not always so clear to the eye. The person who is doing the fronting doesn't always even recognize the actual nature of his or her function. When, for instance, Andrew Young accepted Carter's appointment of himself to the post of U.N. ambassador, it is possible that he viewed this appointment as a significant step in a supposed African-American climb in progress in the U.S. political process. In fact, however, Young was used by the U.S. political Establishment to present to an increasingly vociferous nations-of-color component in the U.N. a face of an Uncle Sam that would appear non-racist and concerned about the conditions in the so-called "third world." But though Young was a good mouthpiece for U.S. foreign policy, he had to get the hatchet because of his penchant for occasionally forgetting that his role was that of parrot. And even though his personal views were typically pro-status quo -both politically and economically-sometimes he made remarks, like the one about there being thousands of political prisoners in the U.S., that struck certain of the political Establishment's "raw nerves." It may be the case, however, as indicated by his support of Mondale over Jesse Jackson in the '84 presidential campaign, that Uncle Andy is simply an opportunist.

In fact, a case can be made for putting Jesse Jackson in the category of those who are fronting. At its '84 national convention and throughout the presidential campaign, the Democratic Party made it abundantly clear that the needs and interests of African people in the U.S., and the poor in this country generally, were at the bottom, if any where at all, of its agenda of priorities. Yet long before the dust of his rebuke by the Democratic Party could settle, there Jesse was, urging us to support the Mondale-Ferraro ticket.

But while there may be some dispute about whose interests Jackson and Young acted on behalf of, in the matters discussed here, Gatsha Buthelezi of Azania(South Africa) and Wilson Goode of Philadelphia have taken the practice of fronting for the man to a level of brutal clarity. Buthelezi's Inkatha organization has been, and continues to be, used as hired goons in the Botha government's efforts to stifle the progress of revolutionary groups in and around Crossroads. In addition, Buthelezi has shown himself to be nothing less than an apologist for the political status quo in Azania, apparently in exchange for a favored position in the eyes of his masters, much in the way that a dog does tricks for table scraps and affectionate pats on the head.

Wilson Goode, in his authorizing of the police massacre of the African men, women, and children of MOVE, was sending a message to the Caucasian political/business Establishment in Philadelphia. His message: I'm a good boy. You can depend on me.

If this latest candidate for nomination to the post of U.S. Ambassador to South Africa -Terence Todman- is, in fact, nominated and approved, he will clearly be doing nothing more than fronting for the man. And the majority of Africans in Azania will view him as they do their own fellow-Azanians who colloborate with apartheid.

Examples of this fronting for the man could be cited indefinitely. But the question here is: What motivates these people, particularly, Africans in the U.S.? Why is it that so many Africans in this country—politicians, members of police forces and

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FRONTING..

the military, administrators of government agencies, businesspersons, etc.—so inclined to front for the man? Why are they so willing to perform for his interests at the expense of ours?

The most obvious reason has to do with the question of individual and/or family survival. One has to "make a living." And, of course, one looks for employment that offers a wage or salary that will enable him or her self to live in relative comfort and that offers some seemingly significant level of prestige and/or responsibility. But this reason does not explain why some of us seem to go out of our way to mistreat fellow-African folks in the performance of our duties. In probably every large urban area in the U.S. that has significant(in numbers) African population, there are African policemen who have reputations for being particularly brutal toward their own people. The need to have and keep a job does not explain the actions of African administrators in local, state, and federal agencies who often act more typical of their Caucasian counterparts, in their dealings with us, than the counterparts themselves.

The primary motive forces behind some of the more gung-ho of those Africans fronting for the man are opportunism and a matter of identification and frame of reference. With respect to the former, it is the case that there are many among us who are so driven to "get ahead" that we're willing to sacrifice anyone and anything in order to do so. We know that racism is a major component of most American institutions and believe that the more we victimize our fellow-African folks, the more we will convince our Caucasian bosses that we're okay, that we're "one of the boys."

Identification with Caucasian traits and values and having a frame of reference out of which we **see** things from what we perceive to be Caucasians' point of view frequently characterize African politicians, businesspersons, and various other professionals acting in management positions. Judging from the work of many of them, African journalists suffer, in great numbers, from this affliction. Many of them, having been academically reared on the idea of "objectivity," and the sacredness of the same, have failed to distinguish "objectivity" from an Establishment perspective. They mistake style for substance, form for reality. Having mastered the acceptable and "objective" <u>form</u> of writing and/or broadcasting, they perpetuate myths, distortions, and other adulterations of the <u>substance</u> of real events and developments, their causes and implications. Typically, our preachers, well-indoctrinated in the tenets and nuances of a Europeanized Christian doctrine, do likewise.

Whatever the motives of these various folks who front for the man, the fact is that they are instruments of our victimization and, too commonly, willing instruments. And while we ought to be understanding of their need, like ours, to survive economically and the necessity of their performance of certain duties, there ought to be a line drawn as to how far we can tolerate for them and ourselves to go.

-Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa/Editor
(aka David Rice)

FLAME Editorial Policy

The HARAMBEE FLAME, the monthly publication of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization, is a Pan-Africanist newsletter. This means that the FLAME's priority, with respect to news and views, is African people and events and developments which affect us and are, or should be, of concern to us. The FLAME does not recognize any artificial distinctions among African people based upon place of birth. Therefore, references to African people are made on the basis of our common ancestry. An exception to this policy is the reprinting of articles, or excerpts thereof, from other publications, in which cases we do not alter the terms used therein to fit our editorial policy.

Articles contained in the FLAME do not necessarily reflect the views of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization unless they are accompanied by a statement identifying the views as being those of the organization. Generally speaking, all unsigned articles are by the editor.

We encourage you to submit articles to the FLAME. Please enclose with your submission a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Articles should not exceed 900 words. Short stories are subject to the same restriction with respect to length. We also welcome poetry and graphics.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Educational Opportunities for Africans in the U.S. Declining

"The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights... reported to Congress: 'The Departments of Education and Justice have declined to enforce requirements for eliminating the many pervasive forms of discrimination in education.'

"The attack on education has been systematic and effective. Although minority students are doing better in some areas (a College Entrance Examination report noted that black students posted a 13-point gain in SAT scores in 1982), blacks are losing ground in others--especially at the elementary and secondary levels... Black enrollments at most white colleges and universities have dropped dramatically. Most schools report at least a 50 percent decline in black students enrolled over the last decade.

"While white schools are no longer courting black students, and fewer and fewer working class students are going to four-year colleges, blacks are losing their foothold in higher education just at a time when a collegiate degree is essential for even minimal professional and semi-professional employment...

"One of the most dangerous attacks on education is on the collegiate level... After educating 62 percent of all black Ph. D.'s and most black lawyers, black schools are threatened.

"They are being dismantled through merger with larger white state institutions, diluted by integration of students and faculties, forced to compete with the more inexpensive community colleges among a decreasing pool of applicants, losing some of their best students to white schools which can offer a better financial aid package as well as seeing many of the most prominent teacher-scholars seduced away by the lure of more prestige and higher salaries at big state universities."

-Passages excerpted from "Rhetoric Vs. Reality" by A.W. Jefferson in the May/June issue of BLACK SCHOLAR

Oakland, Site Of Hangings

"On June 24, 1986, a 35 year old African woman, Jacquelyn Peters, from Concord was discovered hanging from a tree in Lafayette, in Contra Costa County, the adjacent county to Alameda, where Oakland is located.

"This is the second hanging recently in Contra Costa. Eight months ago on November 2, 1985, Timothy Lee, a young black man was found hanging in Concord, near the BART station. ...the deaths of Timothy Lee and Jacquelyn Peters have been declared 'suicides' by the police department.

"On the same night that Lee was murdered, two other young black men, Jeffrey Miller and Tony Hall were assaulted and stabbed by two Klansmen in uniform.

"One week before Peters' death, in Orinda, a nearby town in Contra Costa, another black woman's car tires were slashed and 'KKK' was spray-painted on her garage door."

-Passages excerpted from "Second Black Body Found Hanging From Tree In Oakland Suburb," which appears in the July edition of BURNING SPEAR.

African Broadcasters Seek Greater Share Of Advertising Revenues

"Congresswoman Cardiss Collins(D-ILL.), the senior black member of the House Telecommunications Sub-committee, has formally requested that a hearing be held to investigate advertising agencies which discriminate against minority-owned radio stations in the placement of advertisements...Specifically, the problems to be addressed are: (1) the inability of black station owners to secure financing to purchase stations, and (2) the problems encountered when black stations try to obtain a fair share of advertising dollars comparable to their share of the listening audience.

-Passages excerpted from "Congresswoman Seeks Ad Agency Probe," which appears on the front page of the July 26 edition of the MILWAUKEE COURIER.

College in Tanzania Welcomes Azanians

"In the town of Morogoro, 105 miles west of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College welcomes young people fleeing the country of apartheid...

"...Tanzania treats the students at Freedom College as privileged guests who may discuss their problems with the Prime Minister's staff.

"...The school now offers instruction at all levels, including adult education, and its 700 students are considered to be the future leaders of a new South Africa.

"About 40 secondary-school graduates a year obtain scholarships for study in Central America, Europe and Africa. Then, while they await their return to their country, some come back to Morogoro as teachers or doctors; others practice their professions in various places in southern Africa.

"Facilities at Freedom College include a library...; four chemistry and physics laboratories; athletic grounds; and a health clinic."

-Passages excerpted from "A School For Future Leaders" by Jacques De Barrin, which appears in the August edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW, page 30.

African Nations Move Toward Regional Self-Sufficiency

"West African investors from 16 nations, led by Nigeria's contribution of $15 million, have raised $38 million for a new regional bank in hopes of displacing North American and European domination in the area. Establishment of the new Ecobank, to be based in Lome, Togo, will be supervised by Citibank for opening by November.

-Passage excerpted from "Business Briefs" on page 49 of the August edition of WORLD PRESS REVIEW.

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"Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization"

Labor Actions In Azania(So. Africa)

"By July 14 the number of known union leaders in detention was put at more than 245 with nearly 1400 rank-and-file members in jail. Some estimated twice that number...

"Shop floor response to the arrests has been massive. More than 100 stores in the Transvaal province were hit by strikes, which quickly spread to pharmaceutical companies and chemical plants. The authorities reacted by arresting some 1000 workers.

"Some 41,000 miners participated in work stoppages or slowdowns at 12 gold, coal and diamond minds. Miners also boycotted liquor outlets and concessions stores on mine property. About 2,000 of 6,000 workers at the De Beers diamond mines recently returned after a week-long strike. But the Anglo-American group had to close two shafts at its Geduld Mine following a slowdown by some 5000 miners. Some 25,000 -35,000 miners were involved in stoppages at Gencor and Gold Field Mines.

"The purpose of all the strikes was to get employers to take a stand on the state of emergency and the detention of union leaders."

-Passages excerpted from "Shop Floor Struggle Against Apartheid Regime," which appears on page 15 of the July 23 edition of THE GUARDIAN.

WRITING CONTESTS

AIM QUARTERLY is sponsoring two upcoming contests. The essay contest poses the question: "How do you think ghettos can be eradicated? What can individuals do?" The essay must be no more than 2000 words in length and must be submitted by September 30. The short story(up to 4000 words) must be previously unpublished, well-written, and have social significance. There will be cash prizes awarded for the winning short story as well as for the selected essays. Send your entries to: "Short Story Contest" or "Essay Contest"; AIM QUARTERLY; P.O. Box 20554; Chicago, ILL; 60620. Oops! The deadline for the short story contest is September 1.

Sandra, Mia, & Monica

the dresses flow

they flap

they swish

draped loose on dancers springy

lithe

and brown

three dancers

a mother and her girls

long-legged butterflies

in pink

in mauve and blue

flamingo sailing

gazelle bounding

wispy smoke twisting women

weaving magic

to muted trumpet solo fabric

strung on jazzy loom.

Mondo

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